IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HELSINKI ACCORDS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

ONE HUNDRED SECOND CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENTS IN ALBANIA

MAY 22, 1991

Printed for the use of the
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe

[CSCE 102-1-5]

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

45-074cc WASHINGTON : 1991

For sale by the U.S. Government Printing Office
Superintendent of Documents, Congressional Sales Office, Washington, DC 20402
ISBN 0-16-035560-5

J891-20

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

STENY H. HOYER, Maryland, *Chairman*
DENNIS DeCONCINI, Arizona, *Co-Chairman*

DANTE B. FASCELL, Florida
EDWARD J. MARKEY, Massachusetts
BILL RICHARDSON, New Mexico
EDWARD FEIGHAN, Ohio
DON RITTER, Pennsylvania
CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH, New Jersey
JOHN EDWARD PORTER, Illinois
FRANK R. WOLF, Virginia
FRANK LAUTENBERG, New Jersey
TIMOTHY WIRTH, Colorado
WYCHE FOWLER, Georgia
HARRY REID, Nevada
ALFONSE M. D'AMATO, New York
MALCOLM WALLOP, Wyoming
LARRY E. CRAIG, Idaho
Vacant

EXECUTIVE BRANCH

RICHARD SCHIFTER, *Department of State*
STEPHEN J. HADLEY, *Department of Defense*
WILLIAM D. FRITTS, JR., *Department of Commerce*

SAMUEL G. WISE, *Staff Director*
MARY SUE HAFNER, *Deputy Staff Director and General Counsel*
JANE S. FISHER, *Deputy Staff Director*
DAVID M. EVANS, *Senior Advisor for Soviet and East European Affairs*
R. SPENCER OLIVER, *Consultant*

MIKE AMITAY, *Staff Assistant*
BRENDA G. COLLIER, *Receptionist*
OREST DEYCHAKIWSKY, *Staff Assistant*
JOHN FINERTY, *Staff Assistant*
ROBERT HAND, *Staff Assistant*
HEATHER HURLBURT, *Staff Assistant*
JAMES W. HUTCHESON, *Staff Assistant*
JESSE JACOBS, *Staff Assistant*
RONALD McNAMARA, *Staff Assistant*
JEANNE McNAUGHTON, *Staff Assistant*
TOM MURPHY, *Technical Editor*
MICHAEL OCHS, *Staff Assistant*
JAMES S. RIDGE, *Press Secretary*
ERIKA SCHLAGER, *Staff Assistant*
VINCA SHOWALTER, *Staff Assistant*
TOM WARNER, *Printing Clerk*
CORINNE ZACCAGNINI, *Office Administrator*

CONTENTS

WITNESSES

	Page
Dr. Sali Berisha, chairman, the Democratic Party of Albania	3
Ismail Kadare, Albanian novelist	9
Azem Hajdari, Democratic Party and student leader	16

APPENDIX

Steny H. Hoyer, Chairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, opening statement	25
Dennis DeConcini, Cochairman, Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, opening statement	28
Dr. Sali Berisha, prepared statement	30
William D. Fritts, Jr, Commissioner, prepared statement	44
John Prel Kelmendi, president, Albanian-American Cultural Society, letter dated May 18, 1991, to Chairman Hoyer and Cochairman DeConcini	46

DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENTS IN ALBANIA

WEDNESDAY, MAY 22, 1991

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE
Washington, DC

The Commission met, pursuant to call, at 2 p.m. in room 216, Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC, the Honorable Dennis DeConcini, Co-chairman, presiding.

Members present: Dennis DeConcini, Senator Alfonse D'Amato, and William D. Fritts, Jr., Department of Commerce representative.

Also present: Representative Bob McEwen.

Staff present: Mary Sue Hafner, deputy staff director, Jane Fisher, deputy staff director, and David Evans, senior adviser.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe of the Congress of the United States will come to order.

It's a great pleasure to welcome Dr. Berisha here from Albania and Mr. Kadare, also from Albania. We are very pleased that you're here. And Dr. Biberaj, again, we welcome you here, a friend of ours and a good friend of the Albanians. I understand the other guest here is Mr. Hajdari. Is that correct? We welcome you here as well.

Chairman Hoyer is in an important markup right now on an appropriation bill and will be here later. And the House is also having floor votes. He has authorized me to proceed with the hearings.

I've had the privilege to meet our witnesses today in Albania: Mr. Kadare last August and Dr. Berisha just prior to the March elections. Both, to me, are very impressive for their insight regarding developments in Albania and admirable for their advocacy of democratic reforms.

In the past year, I've taken a considerable interest in Albania, having had the opportunity to visit that country twice as the head of the Commission delegation. The Commission's active interest in Albania stems from the desire of that country to join the Helsinki process.

Beginning at the Copenhagen Human Dimension Meeting in June 1990, Albania has been granted observer status at CSCE meetings. Albania would like to move beyond its current observer status and become a full participant in the process.

During the first visit, we were told by almost everyone, from President Alia to the select group of university students that were organized to meet with us, that there was no need for alternative political parties in Albania, nor for the opening of places of wor-

ship. We were told, in fact, that nobody wanted to go to church because Albania did not believe in religion.

At that time, the authorities acknowledged the existence of less than 90 political prisoners. We knew there were many, many more. And no one dared to express openly and clearly their opposition to the government of the Communist Party of Labor.

As a result, the Commission delegation had stated when it left, after its first visit, that it needed to see significant improvements in Albania's human rights performance before we could support Albania's membership in the CSCE.

By the time of our second visit in March of this year, things had changed quite substantially. Several alternative political parties had formed and were fielding candidates for the Albanian Assembly. The population was openly expressing its political preferences. Hundreds of political prisoners had, in fact, been released. And churches and mosques were opening throughout the country.

There is no question that the situation in March was markedly better than it was in August of last year, a fact which we on the Helsinki Commission have welcomed and have even complimented the existing government for moving in what we consider the right direction.

However, when compared to the standards for democracy and human rights held commonly by all of Europe, the United States, and Canada in the Helsinki Final Act and subsequent CSCE documents, these positive developments fell far short in many important respects, including those relating to the critical importance of free and fair elections as stated in the Copenhagen document.

In addition to hearing our witnesses describe the current situation in Albania and the prospects for democracy in that country, the Commission hopes to hear their views on how the United States and the other CSCE countries can best help promote democratic changes in Albania today. We would like to hear their views on how the CSCE process has impacted on developments in Albania as well as how it can best continue to do so.

Similarly, relations between Albania and the United States were finally restored on March 15, 1991, a development which Chairman Hoyer and I very much supported.

A key question now, in addition to that of CSCE membership, is how the United States can best develop these bilateral relations to the benefit of democracy in Albania.

I would like to hear the views of our witnesses on this issue as well. We are very fortunate to have them here today, and I look forward to their statements.

I will now yield to our commissioner from the Department of Commerce, Mr. Fritts, for any opening statements he cares to make.

Mr. FRITTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I'd just like to welcome the witnesses. Dr. Berisha, it's nice to see you again. I was fortunate enough to be on the last trip to Albania and had an opportunity to meet you and offer rather brief congratulations.

I understand that events have not progressed far enough from your perspective, but I, unlike some people, believe that there's hope in what has just happened in Albania. The "genie of democra-

cy" is out of the bottle. And I believe that, although it may take some time, the commitment of the Albanian people to self-determination will prevail.

Mr. Chairman, I'd like to have my prepared statement included at this point.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. The statement will be included. I want to thank Commissioner Fritts for being part of the delegation when we were there.

And, Dr. Berisha, we will hear from you first for any statement you have to make. Please pull the microphone in front of you. You may proceed.

TESTIMONY OF DR. SALI BERISHA, CHAIRMAN, THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF ALBANIA

Dr. BERISHA. Mr. Chairman, Honorable Congressmen and Senators, ladies and gentlemen, Albania's democratic forces, the Democratic Party of Albania, and the entire opposition are grateful to the Congress, Government, and the people of the United States for having invited us to appear before this temple of freedom and democracy.

The Albanians are going through difficult times, and hope remains our only salvation. Your invitation represents a clear indication that we are no longer a forgotten people, or better said as self-forgotten.

We are encouraged and hopeful because the United States remains the bastion of democracy. The journey to this great land gives optimism and strength to all those fighting for democracy, especially to us Albanians.

No indigenous nation in Europe has suffered more than the Albanian nation. During its thousand year long story, it has experienced barbaric occupation, great dramas, long dark periods, genocides, massacres and tortures, and partition as no other nation.

When I ask myself why this great nation has had to suffer so much, I like to remember the story of Job, who survived the test of repeated calamities, but never received an answer to his questions.

Of course, this is not the place to review the history of the Albanian nation, but I would like to remind you that during this century, no nation has suffered as much as my nation. During the first two decades of this century, our nation was divided into two, half of our territories being given to the neighboring countries.

Nevertheless, during the period 1920-24, the Albanians fought for and established the most democratic state in the Balkans. But the frightened reactionary rulers of neighboring countries overthrew Albania's democratic government and, at the same time, killed democracy in the entire region.

From 1925 until today; that is, during the last 65 years, the Albanians have suffered under the worst dictatorships in Europe. Their history reminds one of the American writer Helen Adams Keller, deaf and blind from infancy.

Keller eventually regained her hearing and vision. Her cure went through difficult phases, just like Albania, which after 65 years of dictatorship is now in the process of its reawakening.

But before she joins the family of democratic nations, Albania, just like your great writer, will have to experience further suffering and crisis for many reasons, some of which I will enumerate here.

First, Albania lacks a tradition of a pluralist democracy; second, Albania's experiences under feudalism and totalitarian socialism; third, the establishment after World War II of Enver Hoxha's ruthless dictatorship, which in many aspects surpassed the dictatorship described by George Orwell in his works. This regime isolated the country, which led the world to forget that Albania even existed.

The number of political prisoners and of victims whose freedom of conscience was violated in Albania was greater than in any East European country. This proves not only the high degree of the repression, but also the fact that the Albanians responded to the Bolshevik Stalinist occupation in the same way they had responded to other invasions during their long history.

It is true that they were not able to organize themselves, but, as Nietzsche used to say, where there are graves, there are resurrections. I would like to emphasize that it was the sufferings, tortures, and imprisonments of so many people that eventually gave rise to the democratic change which in Albania started later than in other countries of Eastern Europe.

There were many domestic and foreign factors that led to these changes, the most important being: the spirit of Helsinki; developments in Eastern Europe; the rise to power of Mikhail Gorbachev; dissent of the Albanian intelligentsia, which, although not as vocal as its counterparts in Eastern Europe, played a vital role, especially during the last 3 years; and labor revolts in Shkoder, Kavaje, Tirane, Fier, and Vlore, which represented a clear expression of the popular dissatisfaction from the totalitarian regime.

Labor unrest and the student movement in December 1990 represented the first open challenge to the Albania rulers. Thus, under strong domestic pressure and foreign democratic opinion, the ruling Party of Labor of Albania was forced to initiate reforms and sanction political pluralism.

It was under such conditions that our party, the first opposition party of Albania, was born. Since its inception, the Democratic Party has had to contend with a party which for some 50 years had treated any individual with independent ideas as a traitor, an enemy, subject to long imprisonment.

Immediately, the Communist Party embarked upon a campaign of violence and terror against the Democratic Party, which reached its peak with the massacre in Shkoder on April 2.

In the March 31 elections, the Democratic Party won a partial victory. It won 75 seats in the new Albanian parliament. Some 39 percent of voters voted for the Democratic Party.

But our party won overwhelmingly in all the major cities, Albania's vital centers. Our party won the support of the workers, the youth, intellectuals, the most emancipated sectors of the society.

Although greatly disadvantages in the electoral campaign, the Democratic Party made the Communist Party a marginal party, with the countryside and small military administrative centers remaining its main base of support.

Nevertheless, I would like to emphasize that the election campaign was totally unfair. Foreign observers had expressed different opinions on the nature of the March 31 elections. But, in my opinion, the most objective report was made by the United States Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, and I would like to express my appreciation to the delegation that visited my country.

The electoral process was not fair, free, or honest. This assessment can be substantiated by the following facts. In addition to the massacre in Shkoder on April 2, during the election campaign 6 persons—including Artan Lanja, Ismail Capari, and Mikel Lara—were killed, and 37 others wounded. More than 300 persons were arrested.

The official media, such as radio and TV and the Albanian Telegraphic News Agency, were subject to a Stalinist type of censorship. In many districts, such as Sarande, Permet, Pogradec, and Cjirokaster, Democratic Party candidates, activists, and officials were beaten up, fired from their jobs, their homes, and offices attacked with bombs.

The exodus, this hemorrhage of the Albanian nation, reached its peak during the election campaign. The Communist-sponsored terrorism was followed with the biggest exodus in Albania's history. Within 10 days, 60,000 young Albanians, encouraged by the government, fled to Greece and Italy. Thus, the Albanians became boat people.

In the Central Election Commission, the opposition had only 3 representatives. The election law was biased in favor of the Communist Party. It provided that 6.5 percent of voters could vote in an election zone where they were not registered.

Gerrymandering was widely used. The number of voters from one zone to another differed from 4,000 to 13,000. This made it possible for the Communist Party, with 55 percent of the votes, to ensure 167 seats in the parliament, compared to 75 seats for the Democratic Party, which won some 39 percent of the vote. Thus, with 16 percent of the vote, the Communist Party ensured 92 seats, compared to 30 seats for the Democratic Party, with 16 percent of the vote.

Election day was characterized by many irregularities. On the other hand, there are many examples of chairmen or members of election commissions appearing armed in voting stations.

There were also other irregularities. In many election commissions, the chairman and the secretary did not permit observers from the Democratic Party to observe the counting of ballots.

Naturally, I do not understand how anyone can talk of free election in the absence of a free election campaign. But the most tragic moment among these developments in Albania, the incident which shocked the country and the entire democratic opinion was the massacre of Shkoder.

The beginning of the post-election period in Albania was tragic. On April 2, Shkoder, an ancient city, experienced a true massacre, a political crime, a state-sponsored terrorism.

On that day, students from middle schools which are located on the same street as the Communist Party headquarters, walked from their classes in a protest against the manipulation of votes. With their books in their hands, the students staged a sit-in.

This was not the usual form of protest. Apparently they had learned it from American movies. The police asked the students to disappear. They refused.

The police asked Democratic Party activists for assistance. Our activists complied and convinced the students to leave the square. When only about 20 students still remained in the square, criminals from the ranks of security forces fired from within the headquarters of the Communist Party, killing: Arben Broci, one of the founders and prominent leader of the Democratic Party; Mazmi Kryeziu, Bujar Beshenaku, and Besnik Ceka, all leading activists of the Shkoder branch of our party. In addition, 58 persons were wounded in this massacre.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. Excuse me, Dr. Berisha. Excuse me for interrupting you.

I have been called to the floor of the Senate for a vote. I'm going to ask Commissioner Fritts to continue to chair this hearing. I will be back in about seven minutes. But he will continue, and you may continue with your statement.

Dr. BERISHA. Yes. In this massacre, the security forces used tanks and all sorts of arms, including machine guns. Shkoder, the bastion of our 1,000-year-old civilization, was terrorized and witnessed a bloody spring.

On April 3, Shkoder buried its sons who fell in the struggle for freedom and democracy. To us, they are not only martyrs, but they were great fighters for democracy in Albania.

A commission was appointed, but it has delayed its investigation, suggesting that there is a cover-up. Only two officials have been arrested, and it is known that neither of them fired the shots that killed the victims.

In other words, those who committed this crime, as well as those behind it, remain free. The massacre of Shkoder is clear proof what the Stalinist forces in power in Albania are capable of doing and how distant are the justice and the rule of law for Albanian citizens.

It was in this background that the Democratic Party began its parliamentary activity. As a sign of protest, it decided to boycott the opening session of the parliament.

In other sessions of the parliament, the Democratic Party committed itself to transform the parliament into a true democratic institution. From the very beginning, we rejected the draft constitution prepared by a commission appointed by the Communist Party.

Our parliamentary group prepared a package of 13 laws, all taken from the Helsinki agreements on human rights, the rule of law, and market economies. We insisted on the separation of the legislative, judicial, and executive branches.

Our country has suffered so much under the dictatorship, and we insisted on the creation of a strong parliament and a weak president. The Democratic Party, considering the vital role of the opposition for the development of democracy in Albania, rejected the Communist Party's offer for a coalition government.

It did not propose a candidate for president, although it was well aware of the fact that Communist Party candidates could not meet the demands and hopes of the Albanian people for democracy.

History has assigned this mission to the Democratic Party and the entire Albanian opposition. We also did not give a vote of confidence to the government of Prime Minister Fatos Nano.

The government's program is essentially identical with the program of the Communist Party. These programs provide for state ownership of the land and the continuation of the cooperatives in the village, but do not call for national reconciliation, do not offer a general amnesty, the disarming of the members and activists of the Communist Party, et cetera.

In addition, the Prime Minister Nano failed to answer dozens of questions posed by Democratic Party deputies. In conclusion, the March 31 election has led to a true impasse.

A clear indication of this impasse is the general strike by 320,000 workers, which began on May 16 and has paralyzed the country.

In the beginning of April, workers and independent trade unions sent the government a list of demands, including, first, the immediate identification of those responsible for the massacre of Shkoder. Organizers of the strike do not consider this a political demand, but an issue of survival because they feel threatened.

Second, a 50 percent pay hike, In reality, the demand for these pay hikes is very modest, given the drastic increase in prices during the last 3 years.

In addition, several months ago the government had promised to conduct a study of its wages and prices policy and take appropriate measures.

The general strike in Albania represents a general hunger strike if we take into account the fact that there are thousands of workers whose salaries are too low to meet even the basic needs of their families.

The workers are very unhappy with the attitude of the government of Prime Minister Nano, who rejected their demands. The workers are now demanding the resignation of this government. They say that for 45 years, they have been treated as slaves and still continue to be treated as such.

For these reasons, the workers demand the establishment of a national salvation government, whose main objective should be the organization of a free and fair election campaign next autumn.

On this occasion, I would like to stress that Prime Minister Nano's government will go down in history as the government of the exodus and boat people.

The government's program presented before the parliament does not offer any hope to the people. The government is treating the symptoms and not the causes of the problems the country faces.

On the one hand, the government says it bases its program on foreign assistance, while, on the other hand, its actions prevent such assistance.

This government is pursuing an agricultural policy which does not aim to transform and reform the agricultural sector, but to pacify temporarily the peasantry.

it has expressed itself in favor of privitizations, but the way it is going about achieving it, the government, in fact, is transforming the old political nomenklatura into a new economical nomenklatura, creating, thus, red capitalists and endangering social stability.

In this connection, some foreign corporations are playing a very negative role by providing jobs to members and offsprings of the old nomenklatura. Given the above factors, Prime Minister Nano's government does not deserve to be in power.

But, despite these dramatic times, one thing is for sure: Democratic processes in Albania are irreversible. Similarly, we demand the protection of human rights and national rights of Albanians that live in their territories in Yugoslavia.

Albanians are the only divided nation in Europe, but we do not ask for border changes. We only ask what we are entitled to based on the Helsinki agreements.

We see our future and the solution of our problems only in the integration into the European processes. In other words, we are struggling to rejoin the civilized world not only geographically, but in all aspects.

I must emphasize that my people have pinned their hopes, above everything else, on the United States: the Congress, the Government, and the American people, for several reasons.

First, for Albanians, like for other people, the United States represents the bastian of freedom and democracy.

Second, our people are very grateful to President Wilson and the United States for savings Albania from further partition. As I mentioned earlier, there is a general strike in Albania. Before I departed for the United States, I met with the representatives of the independent trade unions. I asked them whether I should cancel my visit to the United States at this time. I was told to go ahead with my plans.

One of the strike leaders told me, "You must go to the United States. Don't forget that in '20 it was President Wilson who saved Albania. And this time I hope and I pray that President George Bush and the United States will help Albania through this difficult period."

Third, the U.S. Congress and Government have made a great contribution to the develcpment of democracy in Albania and, more than any other government, have supported rights of Albanians in Yugoslavia.

Therefore, the opening, and not the closing, of the United States toward Albania, the intensification of relations, and not the practice of wait and see, are essential for the further development of democracy in Albania. American presence is very encouraging for democratic forces in our country.

I believe that United States-Albanian relations should be concentrated in these fields: First, we need immediate American humanitarian aid, especially food and medical supplies.

Many people are faced with starvation. The market is empty. There is no social assistance. Many workers cannot provide for their families. And there are chronic shortages of medical supplies.

Second, we need your technical assistance, primarily in helping us building democratic institutions, without which our country cannot have democracy.

We desperately need assistance from legal experts regarding the drafting of legislation, including the new constitution. We also need experts and technical advice regarding economical problems.

Third, Albania needs a great commitment from the United States for its economical revival. I do not mean aid for the Communist regime, but for the impoverished people of Albania.

It is essential that Albania be included in all American programs regarding Eastern Europe. I strongly urge that the American Embassy in Tirana be opened as soon as possible, that Voice of America broadcasts to Albania be increased, that the United States Information Agency open a center in Tirana and initiate extensive program exchanges with our country as soon as possible.

Such stages would contribute enormously to the development of democracy in our country. I do not believe that these measures would strengthen the Communist regime.

As it has been done until now, the Democratic Party will struggle for the establishment of true democracy in Albania. We are now concentrating our efforts in expanding our support base all over the country, especially in the countryside.

We seek to realize our political objectives only through peaceful means. We will fight for the establishment of state based on the rule of the law, the free movement of people, ideas, and goods, and the creation of a market economy.

The Democratic Party will continue to demand that the human and national rights of Albanians in Yugoslavia be fully protected.

Ladies and gentlemen, our people are experiencing dramatic times. Nevertheless, I remain optimistic. Like God gave Abraham the promised land for his people, this great democracy will reward the Albanians' trust in democracy by assisting them in restoring full democracy in their country.

Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

Mr. FRITTS. Thank you very much for that very thorough and enlightening statement. I would now like to ask Mr. Kadare to give his statement.

TESTIMONY OF ISMAIL KADARE, ALBANIAN NOVELIST

Mr. KADARE [by interpreter]. First of all, thank you very much for inviting me here, and I'm very pleased to be here.

Rare are institutions that have enjoyed respect such as this institution. Albania is one of the nations that have always expected assistance and expect assistance from this great institution and country.

Albania is the last European country to get rid of the Communist dictatorship. It is not blind that I use the term "to get rid of." In my opinion, communism has died in Albania. It is without a doubt.

We are not concerned about this. We are concerned about other things. The problem is: How can this nation, which has suffered so much, regain democracy?

Please permit me to give you a brief historical review. It is the first time in its 2,000-year history that the Albanian nation has experienced such a dictatorship.

It was not prepared for this type of rule. There are very few nations that were less prepared for such a type of dictatorship than the Albanians, for two main reasons: first, because of its democratic position; second, because of the individual pattern of the Albani-

ans, the concept that this population, this people, has about individual, mind, property, et cetera.

Dictatorship was established in a diabolical manner in this country: first, as a result of World War II and the struggle against the fascists; second, because the dictators emerged and portrayed themselves as allies of the democratic world. Otherwise, the Albanian population could not have been dominated and repressed to the extent that it was.

Another fatal factor has been the division of the Albanian nation into two. This small nation found itself simultaneously under two dictatorships: the Albanian communism and the other Serbian communism.

Divided in two, it was much easier to repress citizens because the two dictatorships were connected, and the survival of one went to the benefit of the other.

Each dictatorship used the other dictatorship as an alibi for its own existence. Therefore, a silent or secret alliance has existed between these two dictatorships. Democracy is a challenge, an equal challenge for both states.

The chief editor of the Yugoslav newspaper, Borba, declared recently that the democratization of Albania is the greatest threat to Serbia. This reflects the fact that the democratization of Albania is a major aspect of development in the Balkans for the further development of the Balkans.

Why was Albania the last country to emerge from dictatorship? There are several factors, but I will only mention a few of them. Stalin died for the second time in 1953, for his empire lasted for another 30 years in the post-Stalin period.

Enver Hoxha, who at the same time was Albania's Lenin and Stalin, died in 1985. Therefore, Albania has, in fact, had only 5 years of post-Stalinism.

In Albania during the last 4 months, as the opposition was legalized, major achievements have occurred. The press is completely free. The reawakening of the nation is full. The opposition is very efficient and has begun to press its views on the new parliament, where they soon will come to power.

Why is the opposition interested in coming to power? It has a need for a normal parliamentary existence. It needs a democratic life.

The normalization of the situation goes in favor of the opposition. Chaos and anarchy will work against the democratic forces. The only chances for the Communists are anarchy and chaos.

The incident which occurred about 2 months ago, when there was an attempt at coup d'etat, was an example. Another example which proves this point is the introduction of the coup that occurred in Shkoder on April 2.

The remnants of dictatorship need chaos and anarchy. Poverty and the economic crisis which until yesterday disturbed the Communist dictatorship now are being used against democracy.

Albania has been changed totally; it has been transformed totally. Although, it appears that the Communists are still in control of the government, they have lost everything.

Now, the problem of whether we or whether the outside world should come to the assistance of Albanians or not has nothing to do

with Communists. There's no question that this question has to do with the future of the Albanian nation. With the exodus of Albanian youth, it is the only country viewed to benefit the remnants of the dictatorship. Albania has an urgent need for two types of assistance: moral assistance and material assistance.

There's a superior force or faction above everything else, and that is the logic of the existence of a nation.

In those cases when the nation suffers, as is the case with the Albanians today, if a nation loses its youth, as is happening currently in Albania, all concepts and all efforts to restructure its life are minimized.

I believe that Albania is one of the countries which has a European vision of itself. It has been a bastion in the defense of the West. It should again become a bastion of Western values in our times.

It is widely known that it was in this country that the first anthem was created in Albania or formulated in Albania, the first Christian liturgy.

The Albanians have pinned their hopes on the United States. An ancient population does not believe in another nation without reason. The Albanians are among the nations that respect and love this nation, meaning the United States, more than anybody else.

I am not saying it because I am currently in the Congress of the United States. Three years ago, in 1989, when Albania was still under a dictatorship, I brought these same words to President Bush. Since I expressed these views then to President Bush, I have the right to repeat them again here.

The Albanians will appreciate very much any assistance that they can get during this difficult period. In connection with the question of Albania's full participation in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, I believe that the Helsinki process has played a major role in the reawakening of Albania. I also believe that the acceptance of Albania in this part of the world plays a major role.

I believe that by increasing pressure for further democratization of Albania, there should be no misunderstanding if Albania is accepted in the CSCE and, even if it is accepted, that that should not be interpreted as assistance to the Communists.

The Western presence cannot be misunderstood today in Albania. This presence should be increased on a daily basis. This presence will bring to an end the remnants and the prospects for the remnants of a dictatorship in Albania. It will encourage the democratic forces. It will provide fresh air to the Albanian people, who are suffocating today.

Thank you very much.

[Applause.]

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. Kadare. And, Dr. Biberaj, I thank you for the fine work there.

I'm going to yield to the former chairman of the Commission, Senator D'Amato, for an opening statement, and he wants to say a few words before he has to leave for other committee work.

Mr. D'AMATO. Mr. Chairman, I have another committee meeting at 3 o'clock, where I'm the lead-off witness, but let me commend you for holding this hearing.

Let me also say to our witnesses how pleased we are to welcome you here as members of the forces of democracy, which are carrying on a valiant battle against those who seek to rule by way of force through an authoritarian regime that does not represent the hopes and aspirations of the Albanian people.

Let me also say that I am privileged to serve on this Commission with Senator DeConcini, our chairman, who has been a leader in the fight for human rights, not only for the Albanian people within Albania, but also for the ethnic Albanians who have been persecuted in Yugoslavia.

I witnessed that persecution in Kosovo. I believe that our action to cut off aid to the central government in Yugoslavia because of their continued persecution of ethnic Albanians will play an important role in letting the Communists know that we are serious. We will stand with people who fight for democracy, we will fight for human rights, and we will use all of the strength that we have.

So I want to commend you, Mr. Chairman, Senator DeConcini, as a champion in the cause of human rights. And I certainly want to say to our distinguished guests today that we look forward to working with you and for the people of Albania.

[Applause.]

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. Thank you, Senator D'Amato.

Dr. Berisha, I have some questions for all of the witnesses here, but let me start with you. Now that the new assembly has begun its work, what are your views of this assembly being able to function and pass enforceable changes and laws within the country of Albania?

Dr. BERISHA. In protest of the massacre of Shkoder, we have decided to breakup the opening, session of the parliament. Then we went to the parliament and worked to transform the institution into a democratic one.

We started the draft of the constitution presented by the Labor Party majority of deputies, and it was not accepted at all. We refused to accept if. We rejected it.

A group of our deputies worked just to formulate about 13 laws as general dispositions. These laws are all lines of Helsinki agreements, Mr. Chairman. And the Helsinki agreements deal with human rights, market economy, the duty of the state, and they have been approved. They are approved.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. The assembly approved all that?

Dr. BERISHA. Yes, the assembly approved them because we decided to——

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. Your party, the Democratic Party, voted against it?

Dr. BERISHA. Yes. We said "We cannot accept the draft. It's not acceptable." We insisted also to create a new commission for the new draft of the constitution, which should be composed by all political forces of Albania, and including as adviser distinguished personalities from different international institutions specialized in such fields.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. And that particular commission, the Democratic Party proposed that as a new commission. Is that correct?

Dr. BERISHA. Yes.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. And has that been accepted by the Labor Party, Party of Labor?

Dr. BERISHA. Yes, it was.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. It was?

Dr. BERISHA. Yes, it was.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. And so that has been passed by the assembly?

Dr. BERISHA. It has.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. It has?

Dr. BERISHA. Yes.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. It has. And that will include all parties, then?

Dr. BERISHA. Yes, even the parties that are not present in the parliament, all other parties.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. So, if I understand it, the assembly went ahead and passed some new constitution, but you opposed it, and the Democratic Party opposed.

But then they created a commission to draft a new constitution. Is that right?

Dr. BERISHA. Yes, that's right.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. So the constitution that they passed is only an interim constitution, supposedly. Is that correct?

Dr. BERISHA. We canceled the constitution of——

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. Oh, you canceled the first one?

Dr. BERISHA. Yes. We canceled the first one.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. I see.

Dr. BERISHA. It was a terrible one.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. Good. Thank you for that explanation. So you really have no constitution now?

Dr. BERISHA. No. We canceled it totally. No, we have no constitution.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. Now, please tell us, Dr. Berisha, what is the time schedule for this commission to put together a constitution and present it to the assembly for adoption?

Dr. BERISHA. The new draft of the constitution should be presented at the end of the year, of this year.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. And you're suggesting that some technical assistance be provided to this commission to help draft this new constitution?

Dr. BERISHA. Yes. We need it very much. We are——

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. And can you tell us a little bit of what you have in mind? Do you know how many people you need or do you know how much money you think would be necessary to give the technical assistance, just some framework?

Dr. BERISHA. For the moment, I can't say the number of the people, but in regard to fields, we need, for example, people specialized in parliamentary, republican constitutions.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. Yes. Experts in——

Dr. BERISHA. Experts.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI [continuing]. Democratic constitutions?

Dr. BERISHA. In democratic constitutions. But I would like to say that we need it more than just for the constitution, because we need it for every branch and level of government. That means for

city laws, for economical laws, and for every branch. We need specialists for all areas of legislation.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. If technical assistance, and humanitarian aid as well, were to come to the Albanian Government because, generally, we deal with governments to governments, what assurance do you think that technical assistance or humanitarian aid would actually be used for the purpose that it was sent for?

Dr. BERISHA. Mr. Chairman, my opinion is that a better way to give this humanitarian aid is to buildup a network there, an American network, and to give this network access to the people.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. Directly to——

Dr. BERISHA. Even Albanians would be more grateful. And it's in their psychology that if a friend gives something to them, they would be grateful to him, to have it directly from him and not through the government.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. Do you think the Party of Labor that's the majority, and Mr. Alia, would permit that to happen? Do you think they would permit the United States or even other countries to come in and setup a humanitarian program and a technical assistance program separate from the central government?

Dr. BERISHA. Well, they are not able to feed their people. They should allow this approach to address the hunger.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. And, Dr. Berisha, with respect to humanitarian aid, what is it that you need most of? Is it foodstuffs, food to feed people? Is it medicine?

Dr. BERISHA. Yes.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. Is it also equipment?

Dr. BERISHA. Mainly foods and medicines——

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. Foods and medicines.

Dr. BERISHA [continuing]. And other sanitary materials.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. Sanitary materials?

Dr. BERISHA. Yes.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. And do you have any estimation as to the quantities of these that you think are necessary?

Dr. BERISHA. I think as far as the humanitarian aid, the shortages are very great. We have many shortages in foods and in medicines, and there is an especially high-risk population, which even if there are foods in market, they cannot buy it because in Albania, there is no social assistance at all, nothing of such kind.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. Is there a system to distribute foods to the people who need it outside of the government?

Dr. BERISHA. For the moment, "No."

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. No?

Dr. BERISHA. No.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. So if there was an assistance program separate from the government, there would also have to be a transportation system or the capability to transport the material, in addition to the humanitarian aid?

Dr. BERISHA. Yes.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. I ask you these questions not to present stumbling blocks because this senator will support and do what he can to see that some assistance is considered for Albania.

As you know, under our system of government, just because one senator wants to do it doesn't mean it's going to happen.

Dr. BERISHA. Yes.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. But that's one of the reasons for these hearings, quite frankly, is to get the testimony from those of you in the democratic movement as to the need to give and to assist Albania at this time.

Let me ask you another question to change the subject a little bit. What are the current trends within the Party of Labor? Are they going through any upheaval or changes within their own party, either towards more democracy or towards more authoritarian rule, or do you know?

Dr. BERISHA. There are now two possibilities. There will be a congress on June 10. But, unfortunately, the greatest number of reformers of this party have left it individually. There are still some people there who are trying to reform the party. I'm afraid they will not succeed.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. The so-called hard-liners will——

Dr. BERISHA. Because the majority are hard-liners now, and probably there will be a split. The second probability is for a split inside this party.

And then we'll have two different parties, two Communist Parties. One will be a Communist Party of Albania composed of Enverists just to save the heritage of Enver Hoxha.

And the other will be the Socialist Party, on which for the moment I cannot comment. We'll have to wait and see.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. Thank you.

The Albanian Government, as you know—and Mr. Alia made his request to the delegation when we were there to become a full member of the CSCE and the Helsinki process.

In your opinion, has the Albanian Government performed enough towards human rights that we, as the United States, should support their full admission to the CSCE and the Helsinki process?

Dr. BERISHA. Mr. Chairman, I share the same idea as Mr. Kadare said here. For me, the time has come that Albania should be accepted as a full member of the Helsinki process.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. I thank you.

Dr. BERISHA. And, in doing so, I may assure you that this will not be in the interest of the new Communist regime, but in the interest of the Albanian people.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. I want to ask Mr. Kadare the same question, whether or not he agrees that Albania should be part of the Helsinki CSCE process. Your opinions are very influential, I believe, with this commission, certainly with this senator.

Would you care to comment about that, Mr. Kadare?

Mr. KADARE (by interpreter]. I believe that the United States should support Albania's membership, for one essential reason. I believe that one of the major problems in Albania today is the loss of hope, a moral crisis, which is unprecedented and can become a factor for the disintegration and worsening of the situation.

When I said earlier that Albania should be accepted into the CSCE, this would not be done as a favor for the Communist regime. It would be done to give some hope to the Albanian population.

There is a sick psychology being spread throughout the population, which produces unusually tragic results, such as the desire of

the youth to leave their fatherland. And if this continues, even the victory of democracy would be a difficult victory.

That's why I emphasize the necessity and the importance of moral assistance for Albania. I don't want to leave any misunderstandings of this issue. Our whole country is now based politically so that it will understand the reasons behind such a decision.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. Mr. Hajdari, would you care to comment on that subject matter.

TESTIMONY OF AZEM HAJDARI, DEMOCRATIC PARTY AND STUDENT LEADER

Mr. HAJDARI [by interpreter]. I fully support Mr. Kadare, and this would be a great moral assistance for the people of Albania, who have suffered so much. Albania has suffered a lot because of the recent exodus.

The acceptance of Albania as a full member in the CSCE would go a long way. The Albanian people would understand such a decision. This is more of a test that's given to the people of Albania.

The people of Albania in no way support the Communist government of their country.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. Thank you, Mr. Hajdari. As long as you are speaking there, let me ask you another question on another subject matter. I do want to come back to the other members.

Is the student unrest that has been a moving force in Albania—are we likely to see more student demonstrations for changes or are they somewhat satisfied?

Mr. HAJDARI [by interpreter]. From its inception, the student movement had as its goal the creation of political pluralism and the emergence of the opposition.

Whether there will be another student movement or further unrest, that's likely to happen in the fall if the government does not take immediate measures to improve the situation.

The Albanian Government has violated all of the rights of students by closing down the university and then by justifying this act supposedly in order to get the government to prepare new textbooks and programs.

There were, obviously, political intentions, and they now will, of course, do something favorable. Nevertheless, I believe that the student movement will continue, just as the popular movement will continue, as long as we have a Communist Party in power there.

The fact that the Communist Party claimed that it represented the working class lowered the support of the workers for it.

As you know, the Democratic Party scored its major victory in the cities, and these factors have made the Communist Party a marginal party.

Therefore, I believe that this Communist Party cannot stay for much longer in power and that it will continue to suppress the population.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. Is the university reopened or has there been a date set for reopening the university?

Mr. HAJDARI [by interpreter]. It started the last month, when the students began taking their exams. And the university—it is expected that the university will be reopened in September.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. It is not open now. Is that correct?

Mr. HAJDARI [by interpreter]. Yes.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. But they are giving exams?

Mr. HAJDARI [by interpreter]. Yes.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. Thank you.

Dr. Berisha, let me ask you a question regarding political prisoners. To your knowledge and, for that matter, your colleagues there, are there any political prisoners being held at this time by the Government of Albania?

Dr. BERISHA. Yes, there are. There are about 100 or more.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. A hundred or more?

Dr. BERISHA. Yes.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. And are you able to identify those, any of those?

Dr. BERISHA. I am sure that they exist. And for a number—I have this number from the Albanian human rights forum. But I think there are more than 100 because many imprisoned for dismantling the statue of Enver Hoxha were not accused of political, but of cultural crimes. It is a cultural crime to dismantle something of cultural value, which, in fact, was dismantled for a political purpose.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. Do you have any knowledge and names of any of those people or is there a way that we can get the names of any of those?

Dr. BERISHA. Mr. Chairman, I can send you the formal list of these people.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. Would that put you in jeopardy yourself with the government by doing that?

Dr. BERISHA. Mr. Chairman——

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. Maybe you are in jeopardy all the time.

Dr. BERISHA [continuing]. We started. We should continue.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. You're a brave man.

Mr. Kadare, I'm going to ask you one last question, and then I'll yield to Mr. Fritts. Should the Western nations push Albania for new elections or will the constitution that is being put together by the end of this year call for new elections?

Mr. KADARE [by interpreter]. If the new constitution does not provide for new elections, I think new elections should otherwise be held again the next year.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. How do we in the West justify demanding new elections if they're not adopted in the new constitution? On what grounds do we press the government?

Mr. KADARE [by interpreter]. I believe that there are so many democratic forces within Albania today that they will demand that new elections be held.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. Dr. Berisha, do you agree with that, that the forces that are within Albania are going to demand new elections, one way or the other, either through the constitution or otherwise?

Dr. BERISHA. Mr. Chairman, there is now a general strike in Albania. All of Albania is striking. And the main demand now is to force the government of Mr. Nano to step down. For many reasons, the workers are right, in my opinion and in the opinion of the Democratic Party.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. Do you think that that will influence the government into calling for new elections?

Dr. BERISHA. The only political solution that they will accept is for this government to step down, for the creation of a new salvation national government, with it's main purpose being to prepare for new elections in the autumn because they are saying to the premier,

> Mr. Premier, your programs should be supported by a vote. You didn't seek a vote because you are acting in the other direction. Secondly, you manipulated the elections. You have lost in all big cities. You can't go there any more. You do not have credibility within or outside the country to govern the country.

And I think they are right.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. When do you think that those elections be called for?

Dr. BERISHA. The end of autumn is the deadline.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. Thank you.

Dr. BERISHA. Thank you very much.

Co-Chairman DECONCINI. I'm going to have to go and vote again. I'm going to yield to Commissioner Fritts for any questions he has.

Also I welcome Congressman McEwen, who has also traveled to Albania with us. Please come on up, Bob, if you'd like. And maybe you have some questions.

I have to go vote. Commissioner Fritts will continue with the hearings. Thank you.

Mr. FRITTS [presiding]. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Just briefly to follow up on the Chairman's question as it relates to full participation in the CSCE process by Albania—and forgive me if I'm putting the cart before the horse, Dr. Berisha, but has there been any discussion with the Labor Party as to the creation of a panel such as this panel that you're testifying before today?

In our meeting with President Alia, he was very intent on doing all that he could to ensure that Albania's petition for full participation was taken as seriously as possible.

And I'm just curious as to whether or not discussions about the creation of a commission within the parliament set up similar to this one has taken place.

And if not, do you think that that would be a valuable avenue to explore?

Dr. BERISHA. Yes. Our parliament will create a human rights commission. And I think that this commission should be charged to follow even the Helsinki agreements.

But this reflects not only the opinion of my party, but, generally, that all Albanian people agree that Albania should be accepted as a full member in the Helsinki process.

Mr. FRITTS. But have you had discussions with the prime minister or his representatives as to the creation of this?

Dr. BERISHA. No.

Mr. FRITTS. A commission similar to this that would monitor, adhere to, those Helsinki principles.

Dr. BERISHA. No, we haven't had such discussions.

Mr. FRITTS. Do you think that would be useful?

Dr. BERISHA. Yes, of course, they would be very useful.

Mr. FRITTS. I may be stepping out of bounds here a little bit, but perhaps it would be useful while you're here to have some discus-

sions with some of the staff who have been intimately involved in the workings of the commission and see if there isn't something that the commission can do to aid in——

Dr. BERISHA. Yes.

Mr. FRITTS [continuing]. Getting your message across to the majority party over there.

And, finally, I have some questions that relate to process, which because of your position as the leader of the opposition party, I think you're uniquely qualified to answer.

And I'm curious as to the rights extended to you within the parliament by the majority party, by the Party of Labor. Have you been guaranteed certain rights of membership on committees within the parliament? Do you have certain rights that are guaranteed to you during the debate on particular issues before the parliament?

Dr. BERISHA. Yes, we have had access in all commissions. We have a one-third representation on all commissions in our parliament.

Mr. FRITTS. Is that based on your representation in the full assembly?

Dr. BERISHA. Yes, it is.

Mr. FRITTS. Just shifting gears here for a moment, I'd like to talk briefly about the moves toward a free market economy. President Alia was very insistent that whatever the outcome of the elections, whether the Labor Party or the Democratic Party won, he was most convinced that a move toward a free market economy was going to go ahead full steam, although he added that he didn't feel as though shock therapy was the best for Albania, that it needed some sort of a transition period.

Do you feel that the Labor Party is committed to moving toward a free market economy or are they just going to do those cosmetic things which they hope will satisfy the international community?

Dr. BERISHA. The Labor Party is able to do only cosmetic things and, in my opinion, their program took phrases from our program, and they cannot devote a full program for introducing market economy.

Let me just mention one thing as an example. For the agriculture, they're giving some land to the peasants, but the land is given to the peasants as state property, just to calm their souls and nothing more.

And this will not increase, but this will surely decrease production in Albania, because the peasants have no means to sow and to dig this land.

Mr. FRITTS. I will be particularly interested to follow the privatization process as it proceeds in Albania.

I'd like to say that, in spite of the trouble and hardships that all of you at the table have experienced, I'm impressed that each and every one of you remains optimistic.

That that is perhaps the most important aspect of your testimony. You are optimistic in spite of the violence in Shkoder and all of the attendant difficulties you have had integrating into the parliamentary system. I am impressed that you are optimistic. And that means a great deal as well to those of us who are hopeful for your success.

Mr. Kadare, I just have one question for you. During your testimony, you referred to a free press in Albania. And I am interested in learning to what degree a free press exists. In particular, to what degree does a free press exist outside of the major metropolitan areas, the major cities, in the rural, small towns and villages in Albania?

Mr. KADARE [by interpreter]. When I said that the press is free, I had in mind the opposition press. By saying that the press is fully free, by that I mean that the opposition newspapers are free nowadays to write almost anything they want to write, to criticize the policies of the government or the party, to refer to the former dictator Hoxha as a nasty fellow and what have you.

Mr. FRITTS. I understand that the distribution process is somewhat limited, as is the access to paper and ink.

Mr. KADARE [by interpreter]. I left Albania a while back, and I'm not aware of these troubles.

Mr. FRITTS. Dr. Berisha, do you——

Dr. BERISHA. Yes, it is true. Our newspaper is not distributed correctly, and there are impediments to circulation in the countryside. And, apparently, being so poor a party, we have no means to sell it in every village. These are the problems in the distribution of our opposition newspaper.

Mr. FRITTS. I have been working closely with several associations here in the United States that are concerned with the survival of a free press.

Specifically, we have been concerned about the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Europe. While you are here, if it is at all possible, I would like to try to have you meet with some representatives of the media that perhaps might be able to offer not only some technical assistance, but perhaps financial assistance as well.

When we returned from Albania, I contacted the National Endowment for Democracy, which has been successful in some of its endeavors within these emerging democracies and free market economies.

And I would hope that you would have an opportunity to contact that organization while you're here in the States for your visit.

Dr. BERISHA. I am very thankful for any contacts and assistance that this organization can provide for our press.

Mr. FRITTS. Thank you.

Dr. BERISHA. Thank you.

Mr. FRITTS. On a personal note, when I was in Tirane, I struck up a friendship with a young Albanian student. And he asked me when I came back to this country if i;could;send;him some novels in English so that he could try to improve his language skills and share those books with his friends and neighbors.

If I give you these books and a letter that I have written, would you mind taking them back home with you and mailing them for me when you get back there?

Dr. BERISHA. With pleasure.

Mr. FRITTS. Thank you very much.

Bob? Congressman McEwen was with us on that trip.

Mr. MCEWEN. I'll volunteer the use of the frank so the board proctor's arm doesn't fall off from carrying your books.

Mr. FRITTS. I wish I had more to send.

Mr. MCEWEN. It's such a pleasure to see you. You are an inspiration to anyone who loves freedom and democracy. And for the work that you're doing, we rejoice, and we cheer, and we are with you.

Can you describe for me the condition of the presidency as a result of the most recent election? Is he stronger? Is he exposed?

Dr. BERISHA. Being a country that lived for many, many years in dictatorship, we decided to fight for a strong parliament and a weak President in order to prevent the risk of another strong hand, hard-line, and another dictatorship.

The President now has a limited function. In fact, in the old drafts of constitutions that they presented, the President was vested the same function as the First Secretary of Labor Party. That simply means absolute power.

Mr. MCEWEN. Commissioner Fritts mentioned about the role of the press. And you remember when we were there, we met with the president. And then it was portrayed on the evening news as somewhat of an endorsement. And Chairman DeConcini went to great lengths the following day to communicate that that was not any such a case.

How have things changed, if at all, in your relationship with the television media, in particular? Are you getting fairer treatment than you were when we were there?

Dr. BERISHA. In fact, Albanian television is still controlled by the same forces that have controlled it before. It is a kind of censorship probably even controlled by our state security.

But during the last days, the situation has changed. We have improved the law, according to which Albanian radio and TV and the Albanian news agency should be dependent on the parliament and not on the government.

Mr. MCEWEN. How much attention have you received? Have you been able to hold press conferences and have them fairly reported or not?

Dr. BERISHA. For example, for the work of the parliament, each speech should be transmitted for 2.5 minutes, each speech. But the selection is not quite correct. That's a problem.

Mr. MCEWEN. I understand that.

Mr. Hajdari, can you describe for me if there are any generational differences in how the young people feel towards the Democratic Party? And touch on the urban and rural again for me, if you would.

Mr. HAJDARI [by interpreter]. I would say that it was the youth that gave the most important contribution to the creation of the Democratic Party and for the strengthening of this new force, for the creation of this new political force, the Democratic Party, which is supported wholeheartedly by the Albanian people, who had all their hopes on the democratic future of the country.

I can tell you that from the members of the party, 62 percent are young people. We have also created commissions looking at our party which will deal with a few issues, and we intend to create a youth organization, not like the official youth organization which existed, and which still exists, but is controlled by the Communist Party.

This organization will serve better the issues of the young people. They will have the opportunity for a much better education.

Time is on the side of the youth, and I am convinced that they will be able to find their own best approach.

Mr. MCEWEN. What is the youth, you say?

The INTERPRETER. I am convinced that——

Mr. MCEWEN. The sentence before that. You said "God" or "I" am on the side of the youth or something. I didn't——

The INTERPRETER. No. Time. Time.

Mr. MCEWEN. Time?

The INTERPRETER. Yes.

Mr. MCEWEN. I'm sorry.

Mr. HAJDARI [by interpreter]. There are a lot of differences between cities and the countryside, I would say. The fact that we have not been able to provide as much information in the countryside as we were able to do in the cities has made those living in the country less aware of the situation.

The Communists controlled all the major mass media in the country, and this contributed to the victory in the countryside. The Communists have measures to prevent the distribution of our newspapers, the newspapers of the opposition. Because of these reasons, the peasants really did not understand or did not comprehend our message.

Regarding the cities, I can say that they have played a major role in the totalitarian dictatorship under Hoxha. And I could say that democracy has been restored in Tirana, Shkoder, Vlore, and Kavaje.

The fighting that has been going on now for 7 days has reinforced or strengthened the links among these cities, but there have been greater efforts on the part of the opposition. They are also encouraged by the role that we are playing in the new parliament. They will accept our message and support it in the cities and the countryside.

Mr. MCEWEN. Is there anything during the course of the campaign that you would have done differently or that the National Endowment for Democracy or some other organization could have done to be more helpful?

Mr. HAJDARI [by interpreter]. We were engaged in an election campaign which was not fair. Throughout the 4 months before the election, since the party was created, the party had few resources and only two cars.

Our communications with our branches outside the centers were blocked. We were subjected to great terror. The mass media were controlled and dominated by the ruling Communist Party.

The difficulties we faced reduced the support, the 100 percent support, the Party of Labor used to achieve in the elections.

I believe that the elections in Albania will be held soon, because the party in power has lost the support of the population. It is a government which has not denied or rejected the legacy of its founder. It has no credibility whatsoever.

If the elections were to be held within the next year, I believe that the opposition would come to power. And I'm totally convinced that this parliament will not exist for more than 2 years.

The development of new forces, new political forces, in Albania will require changes, I suspect.

Mr. MCEWEN. Just think what you could have done if you had four cars. You did pretty well with—when you meet with the White House, be sure and remind them because Mr. Sununu——

Mr. HAJDARI [by interpreter]. If we had more means at our disposal, we would have communicated better with the countryside.

Mr. MCEWEN. Mr. Sununu is very receptive to the needs of travel, and he'll be helpful.

One question, Mr. Kadare, I want to ask. But before I do, the impact of Voice of America, what part does it have to play?

The INTERPRETER. It's my pleasure to translate this one.

Mr. KADARE [by interpreter]. The Voice of America has played an exemplary role in all these processes. The fact that the Albanian question was treated by the Voice in such a serious manner for the Albanian population reflected the sincere efforts of the U.S. Government in dealing with the affairs of and developments in Albania.

This voice has been a trustworthy voice and, therefore, very effective. At very difficult moments, this voice, in its conservative stance, has contributed constructively in avoiding the outbreak of bloodshed and unrest.

Mr. HAJDARI [by interpreter]. I would like to say something, too. The Voice of America has been the only link between the Albanian people because it has found a great interest in our local media.

It appears that the Communist-controlled media in Albania has never been able to denounce even one item given by the Voice of America. It has made broadcasts which are credible in the eyes of the Albanian population.

It is something that the Communists fear.

The INTERPRETER. Mr. Hajdari says that it is possible that our country sometimes is being run by the Voice of America.

Mr. MCEWEN. It's a marvelous voice, and we're glad that it's there.

I thank you very much. My time is up, but I want to leave off as I began, by saying how much I hope inspiration and respect we feel for you in what you're going through and what you're accomplishing and the way that you are rewriting the history of Europe and the world in this last decade of this millennium.

I also want to thank Mr. DeConcini as well as Commissioner Fritts for their generosity to me in allowing me to be with you and participate today.

Mr. FRITTS. Thank you very much, Congressman McEwen.

He is a tough act to follow. He is one of the more eloquent speakers in our House of Representatives.

Unfortunately today, you joined us when both the House and Senate had very heavy schedules. I just want to make sure that when you leave here today, you won't leave with the impression that your struggle is not foremost in the minds of the members.

Every one of them would have been here had they not had prior commitments. Chairman Hoyer, I know, was very concerned that he could not make it, but I think you know of his commitment to your struggle as well.

I'm sure you will recall the words of Chairman DeConcini and Senator D'Amato, who I think expressed our feelings for the entire membership.

I want to thank you for joining us and thank you for your time. We wish you well. As Congressman McEwen said, you are in our hearts and in our minds, and we are with you. Thank you very much.

[Whereupon, at 3:59 p.m., the Commission was adjourned.]

APPENDIX

STATEMENT OF STENY H. HOYER, CHAIRMAN
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE
HEARING ON DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENTS IN ALBANIA
MAY 22, 1991

The purpose of today's hearing of the Helsinki Commission is to examine recent developments in Albania, which on March 31 held its first multi-party elections in almost 70 years, and the prospects for the development of democracy in that country.

Albania is the only country in Europe which voluntarily chose to exclude itself from the CSCE or Helsinki process in the early 1970's. Instead, the Albanian leadership decided to remain isolated from European affairs on the one hand, and, on the other, to maintain at home the repression of Albanian society which prevented any visible dissent whatsoever.

This isolation and control, however, proved entirely insufficient to check the wave of political liberalization which swept through Central and Eastern Europe in 1989. As one totalitarian leader after another fell to popular pressure for reform, there was no escaping the inevitable development of similar pressures from within Albania itself. The opening of Albania in 1990, both internally and externally, was at first incremental, but growing popular protest soon gave reform a momentum of its own. A year which saw the release of hundreds of political prisoners, the removal of bans on travel abroad and religious activities, and growing interest in rejoining Europe, ended with a decision by the Albanian communist leadership to permit alternative political parties and compete in multi-party elections.

As a whole, the March 31 elections could not be considered free and fair, as indicated in a report by the Helsinki Commission staff. Nevertheless, they did bring to an end the era of the one-party state in Albania. The ruling, communist Party of Labor won a critical two-thirds majority of seats in the Albanian Assembly, with most of the remaining going to the leading opposition, the Democratic Party of Albania.

This is only the beginning. The question now is where Albania will go from here. While the path to multi-party elections was not an easy one for Albania, the road ahead poses even greater challenges. The building of democratic institutions in a country whose population has known only repression, and the undertaking of economic reforms in a country which is the poorest in Europe, will not be easy.

The Helsinki Commission is very fortunate to have two special witnesses today who are best able to give some answers to the question of where Albania will go from here. Both have, in fact, been catalysts for the changes which have occurred in Albania in the last year.

The first is Sali Berisha (SAH-lee bear-EE-sha). A cardiologist and professor, Dr. Berisha was among the first actively to urge reforms in Albania. Last December, he and several others acted immediately upon the decision of the Albanian authorities to permit independent organizations by forming the first opposition political party in the country -- the Democratic Party of Albania -- of which he has since served as Chairman. The Democratic Party won 75 of the 250 seats in the Albanian Assembly; Dr. Berisha holds one of them. Dr. Berisha is accompanied by Azem Hajdari (AH-zem high-DAR-ee), a student activist and fellow member of the Democratic Party leadership who is also a delegate in the Assembly.

The second witness is Ismail Kadare (iss-my-EEL kah-dar-ay), Albania's greatest novelist and most well-known intellectual. His works include the novels *The General of the Dead Army, Chronicle in Stone, Doruntine,* and *The Palace of Dreams*. Mr. Kadare was the first prominent Albanian to express criticism of the regime and its policies, especially with his attacks on the Sigurimi (see-gore-EE-me), the Albanian secret police. While visiting France in October 1990, he decided not to return to Albania out of frustration with the lack of progress in the development of democratic reforms. This decision represented a severe blow to the Albanian leadership. Mr. Kadare's subsequent writing has been severely critical of the Albanian Government.

The Helsinki Commission is grateful that these two witnesses, both of whom have played such a large role in bringing increased openness and pluralism to Albania, were willing to travel from the European continent to be with us here today. We welcome you, Dr. Berisha, Mr. Kadare, and Mr. Hajdari, and look forward to hearing your views.

COMMISSION ON
SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE
237 FORD HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-1901

STATEMENT OF DENNIS DECONCINI, CO-CHAIRMAN
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE
HEARING ON DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENTS IN ALBANIA
MAY 22, 1991

It is a great pleasure to welcome Dr. Berisha and Mr. Kadare here today. I have had the privilege to meet them previously in Albania -- Mr. Kadare last August and Dr. Berisha just prior to the March elections. Both are impressive for their insights regarding developments in Albania, and admirable for their advocacy of democratic reforms.

In the past year, I have taken a considerable interest in Albania, having had the opportunity to visit that country twice as head of Commission delegations. The Commission's active interest in Albania stems from the desire of that country to join the Helsinki process. Beginning at the Copenhagen Human Dimension Meeting in June 1990, Albania has been granted observer status at CSCE meetings. Albania would like to move beyond its current observer status and become a full participant in the process.

During the first visit, we were told by everybody, from President Ramiz Alia to a selected group of university students, that there was no need for alternative political parties in Albania, nor for the opening of places of worship. At that time, the authorities acknowledged the existence of less than 90 political prisoners, and no one dared to express openly and clearly their opposition to the government of the communist Party of Labor. As a result, the Commission delegation had stated that it needed to see significant improvements in Albania's human rights performance before membership in the CSCE would become possible.

By the time of the second visit in March, things had changed. Several alternative political parties had formed and were fielding candidates for the Albanian Assembly, the population was openly expressing its political preferences, hundreds of political prisoners had been released, and churches and mosques were opening throughout the country. There is no question that the situation in March was markedly better than that in August, a fact which we on the Helsinki Commission have welcomed. However, when compared to the standards for democracy and human rights held commonly by all of Europe, the United States and Canada in the Helsinki Final Act and subsequent CSCE documents, these positive developments fell short in many important respects, including those relating to free and fair elections in the Copenhagen document.

In addition to hearing our witnesses describe the current situation in Albania and the prospects for democracy in that country, the Commission hopes to hear their views on the how the United States and other CSCE countries can best help promote democratic change in Albania today. We would like to hear their views on how the CSCE process has impacted on developments in Albania as well as how it can best continue to do so.

Similarly, relations between Albania and the United States were finally restored on March 15, 1991, a development which Chairman Hoyer and I very much supported. A key question now, in addition to that of CSCE membership, is how the United States can best develop these bilateral relations to the benefit of democracy in Albania. I would like to hear the views of our witnesses on this issue as well. We are very fortunate to have them here, and I look forward to hearing their statements.

STATEMENT OF DR. SALI BERISHA
CHAIRMAN
THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF ALBANIA

U.S. COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE
22 May 1991

Mr. Chairman, Honorable Congressmen and Senators, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Albania's democratic forces, the Democratic Party of Albania and the entire opposition are grateful to the Congress, Government and the people of the United States for having invited us to appear before this temple of freedom and democracy. The Albanians are going through difficult times and hope remains our only salvation. Your invitation represents a clear indication that we are no longer a forgotten people or better said self-forgotten. We are encouraged and hopeful because the United States remains the bastion of democracy. The journey to this great land gives optimism and strength to all those fighting for democracy, especially to us Albanians. No indigenous nation in Europe has suffered more than the Albanian nation. During its thousand year long history, it has experienced barbaric occupations, great dramas, long dark periods, genocide, massacres and tortures, and partition as no other nation.

When I ask myself why this great nation has had to suffer so much, I like to remember the story of Job, who survived the test

of repeated calamities but never received answers to his questions. Of course this is not the place to review the history of the Albanian nation, but I would like to remind you that during this century no nation has suffered as much as my nation. During the first two decades of this century, our nation was divided into two, half of our territories being given to the neighboring countries. Nevertheless, during the period 1920-24, the Albanians fought for and established the most democratic state in the Balkans. But the frightened reactionary rulers of neighboring countries overthrew Albania's democratic government and at the same time killed democracy in the entire region. From 1925 until today, that is during the last 65 years, the Albanians have suffered under the worst dictatorships in Europe. Their history reminds one of the American writer Hellen Adams Keller, deaf and blind from infancy. Keller eventually regained her hearing and vision. Her cure went through difficult phases, just like Albania, which after 65 years of dictatorship is now in the process of its reawakening. But before she joins the family of democratic nations, Albania, just like your great writer, will have to experience further suffering and crisis for many reasons, some of which I will enumerate here:

1. Albania lacks a tradition of a pluralist democracy.

2. Albania's experiences under feudalism and totalitarian socialism.

3. The establishment, after World War II, of Enver Hoxha's ruthless dictatorship, which in many aspects surpassed the dictatorship described by George Orwell in his works. This regime

isolated the country which led the world to forget that Albania even existed.

The number of political prisoners and of victims whose freedom of conscience was violated in Albania was greater than in any East European country. This proves not only the high degree of repression but also the fact that the Albanians responded to the Bolshevik Stalinist occupation in the same way they had responded to other invasions during their long history. It is true that they were not able to organize themselves, but as Niche used to say, where there are graves there are resurrections. I would like to emphasize that it was the sufferings, tortures, and imprisonments of so many people that eventually gave rise to the democratic changes which in Albania started later than in other countries of Eastern Europe. There were many domestic and foreign factors that led to these changes, the most important being: the spirit of Helsinki; developments in Eastern Europe; the rise to power of Mikhail Gorbachev; dissent by the Albanian intelligentsia, which, although not as vocal as its counterpart in Eastern Europe, played a vital role, especially during the last three years; and labor revolts in Shkoder, Kavaje, Tirane, Fier, and Vlore, which represented a clear expression of the popular dissatisfaction from the totalitarian regime. Labor unrest and the student movement in December 1990, represented the first open challenge to the Albanian rulers. Thus under strong domestic pressure and the foreign democratic opinion, the ruling Party of Labor [Communist Party] of Albania was forced to initiate reforms and sanction political

pluralism.

It was under such conditions that our Democratic Party, the first opposition party in Albania, was born. Since its inception, the Democratic Party has had to contend with a party which for some fifty years had treated any individual with independent ideas as a traitor and an enemy, subject to long imprisonment. Immediately, the Communist Party embarked upon a campaign of violence and terror against the Democratic Party, which reached its peak with the massacre in Shkoder on April 2, 1991.

In the March 31 elections, the Democratic Party won a partial victory. It won 75 seats in the new Albanian parliament. Some 39 percent of voters voted for the Democratic Party. But our party won overwhelmingly in all the major cities, Albania's vital centers. Our party won the support of the workers, the youth and the intellectuals -- the most emancipated sectors of the society. Although greatly disadvantaged in the electoral campaign, the Democratic Party made the Communist Party a marginal party, with the countryside and small military administrative centers remaining its main base of support. We were hoping, of course, for a bigger victory. But the Democratic Party was founded only three months before the elections, the Albanian opposition was the poorest in Europe, and lacked the necessary resources and time to explain its program to the impoverished peasantry. Nevertheless, I would like to emphasize that the election campaign was totally unfair. Foreign observers have expressed different opinions on the nature of the March 31 elections. But in my opinion, the most objective

report was that by the U.S. Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe and I would like to express my appreciation to the delegation that visited my country. The electoral process was not free, fair or honest. This assessment can be substantiated by the following facts:

1. In addition to the massacre in Shkoder on April 2, during the election campaign six persons, including Artan Lenja, Ismail Capari, and Mikel Lara, were killed and 37 others wounded. More than 300 persons were arrested, imprisoned, and mistreated in the wake of the dawning of the monument of the Stalinist dictator Enver Hoxha. Proceedings against these people continue.

2. The official media, such as radio and television and the Albanian Telegraphic News Agency were subjected to a Stalinist-type censorship. The director of radio and television was replaced by an official from the Communist Party's Institute for the Study of Marxism-Leninism. During the election campaign, the representatives of the Democratic Party were permitted to express their views on television on three occasions: the first time they were allotted 60 minutes, the second time 45, and the last time 5 minutes. In contrast, the ruling Communist Party used the media extensively. In line with the party's Stalinist censorship rules, the martyrs of Shkoder were described by the official media as terrorists.

3. In many districts, such as Sarande, Permet, Pogradec, and Gjirokaster, Democratic Party candidates, activists and officials were beaten up, fired from their jobs, their homes and

offices attacked with bombs, etc. In addition, in the countryside, in conjunction with many threats and intimidations, the Communist Party distributed livestock to the peasants, only to take them back after the elections.

4. The exodus, this hemorrhage of the Albanian nation, reached its peak during the election campaign. Disappointed and having lost all hope, a large number of young Albanians are leaving their homeland. Since last July the population of Albania has declined by three percent. The exodus is being manipulated by the communist regime. The communist-sponsored terrorism in February was followed with the biggest exodus in Albania's history: within ten days, 60,000 young Albanians, encouraged by the government, fled to Greece and Italy. Thus the Albanians became "boat people."

5. In the Central Election Commission, the opposition had only three representatives, compared to ten representatives for the Communist Party and its mass organizations. There is no question that the commission was biased, since 70 percent of its members were also candidates.

6. The election law was biased in favor of the Communist Party. It provided that 6.5 percent of voters could vote in an election zone where they were not registered. This percentage was widely used in Fier and Berat and in other districts, where peasants were transferred from one voting zone to another, permitting them to vote two or three times.

7. Gerrymandering was widely used. The number of voters from one zone to another differed between 4,100 to 13,300. This

made it possible for the Communist Party with 55 percent of the vote to ensure 167 seats in the Parliament, compared to 75 seats for the Democratic Party, which won some 39 percent of the vote. Thus with 16 percent of the vote the Communist Party ensured 92 seats compared to 30 seats for the Democratic Party with 16 percent of the vote.

8. Election day was characterized by many irregularities. In addition to exploiting the 6.5 percent rule in a number of cities and villages such as Fier, Berat, Tropoje, and Peshkopi, on election day in many regions in the countryside security forces fired in the air with the aim of intimidating and frightening the peasants. On the other hand, there were many examples of chairmen or members of election commissions appearing armed in voting stations. There were also other irregularities. In many election commissions, the chairman and the secretary did not permit observers from the Democratic Party to observe the counting of ballots; this happened in the election zone of Kamez, near Tirane, and in many zones of Lac, Lezhe, etc. There were also manipulations in the central zone. There were 5,400 polling stations, which made it impossible for a young party such as the Democratic Party to observe the activities of all stations. I believe that all these facts prove that the election campaign was not free, fair or honest. Naturally, I do not understand how anyone can talk of free elections in the absence of a free election campaign. But the most tragic moment in the developments in Albania, the incident which shocked the country and the entire

democratic opinion was the massacre of Shkoder.

The beginning of the post-election period in Albania was tragic. On April 2, Shkoder, an ancient city, experienced a true massacre, a political crime, state-sponsored terrorism. On that day, students from high schools which are located on the same street as the Communist Party headquarters, walked from their classes in a protest against the manipulation of votes. With their books in their hands, the students staged a sit-in. This was not a usual form of protest; apparently they had learned it from American movies. The police asked the students to disperse; they refused. The police asked Democratic Party activists for assistance. Our activists complied and convinced the students to leave the square and when only about 20 students still remained in the square, criminals from the ranks of security forces fired from within the headquarters of the Communist Party, killing Arben Broci, one of the founders and prominent leader of the Democratic Party, Nazmi Kryeziu, Bujar Beshenaku, and Besnik Ceka, all leading activists of the Shkoder branch of our party. In addition, 58 persons were wounded. In this massacre, the security forces used tanks, and all sorts of arms, including machine guns. Shkoder, the bastion of our thousand year old civilization, was terrorized and witnessed a bloody spring. On April 3, Shkoder buried its sons who fell in the struggle for freedom and democracy. To us they are not only martyrs but they were great fighters for democracy in Albania. A commission was appointed, but it has delayed its investigation, suggesting there is a cover up. Only two officers have been

arrested and it is known that neither of them fired the shots that killed the victims. In other words, those who committed this crime as well as those behind it remain free. The massacre of Shkoder is clear proof what the Stalinist forces in power in Albania are capable of doing and how distant are the justice and the rule of law for Albanian citizens.

It was in this background that the Democratic Party began its parliamentary activity. As a sign of protest, it decided to boycott the opening session of the parliament. In other sessions of the parliament, the Democratic Party committed itself to transform the parliament into a true democratic institution. From the very beginning we rejected the draft constitution prepared by a commission appointed by the Communist Party. Our parliamentary group prepared a package of 13 laws, all taken from the Helsinki agreements on human rights, the rule of law, and market economy. We insisted on the separation of the legislative, judicial, and executive branches. Our country has suffered so much under the dictatorship and we insisted on the creation of a strong parliament and a weak president. The Democratic Party, considering the vital role of the opposition for the development of democracy in Albania, rejected the Communist Party's offer for a coalition government. It did not propose a candidate for President, although it was well aware of the fact that Communist Party candidates could not meet the demands and hopes of the Albanian people for democracy. History has assigned this mission to the Democratic Party and the entire Albanian opposition. We also did not give a vote of

confidence to the government of Prime Minister Fatos Nano. The government's program is essentially identical with the program of the Communist Party. These programs provide for state ownership of the land and the continuation of cooperatives in the village, but do not call for national reconciliation, do not offer a general amnesty, the disarming of the members and activists of the Communist Party, etc. In addition, Prime Minister Nano failed to answer dozens of questions posed by Democratic Party deputies. In conclusion, the March 31 election has led to a true impasse.

A clear indication of this impasse if the general strike by 320,000 workers, which began on May 16 and has paralyzed the country. In the beginning of April, workers and independent trade unions sent the government a list of demands, including:

1. The immediate identification of those responsible for the massacre of Shkoder; organizers of the strike do not consider this a political demand but an issue of survival, because they feel threatened.

2. A 50 percent pay hike. In reality, the demand for these pay hikes is very modest given the drastic increase in prices during the last three years. In addition, several months ago the government had promised to conduct a study of its wages and prices policy and take appropriate measures. The general strike in Albania represents a general hunger strike if we take into account the fact that there are thousands of workers whose salaries are too low to meet even the basic needs of their families. The workers are very unhappy with the attitude of the government of Prime Minister

Nano, who rejected their demands. The workers are now demanding the resignation of this government. They say that for 45 years they have been treated as slaves and still continue to be treated as such. For these reasons, the workers demand the establishment of a national salvation government, whose main objective should be the organization of a free and fair election campaign next autumn. On this occasion, I would like to stress that Prime Minister Nano's government will go down in history as the government of the exodus and boat people. The government's program presented before the parliament does not offer any hope to the people. The government is treating the symptoms and not the causes of the problems the country faces. On the one hand, the government says it bases its program on foreign assistance, while on the other hand its actions prevent such assistance. This government is pursuing an agricultural policy which does not aim to transform and reform the agricultural sector, but to pacify temporarily the peasantry. It has expressed itself in favor of privatization, but the way it is going about achieving it, the government in fact is transforming the old political nomenklatura into a new economic nomenklatura, creating thus red capitalists and endangering social stability. In this connection, some foreign corporations are playing a very negative role by providing jobs to members and offspring of the old nomenklatura. Given the above facts, Prime Minister Nano's government does not deserve to be in power.

But despite these dramatic times, one thing is for sure: democratic processes in Albania are irreversible. Similarly, we

demand the protection of human and national rights of Albanians that live in their territories in Yugoslavia. Albanians are the only divided nation in Europe, but we do not ask for border changes. We only ask what we are entitled to based on the Helsinki agreements. We see our future and the solution of our problems only in the integration into the European processes. In other words, we are struggling to rejoin the civilized world not only geographically but in all aspects.

I must emphasize that my people have pinned their hopes above everything else on the United States -- the Congress, the Government, and the American people -- for several reasons:

1. For the Albanians, like for other people, the United States represent the bastion of freedom and democracy.

2. Our people are very grateful to President Wilson and the United States for saving Albania from further partition. As I mentioned earlier, there is a general strike in Albania. Before I departed for the United States, I met with the representatives of the Independent Trade Unions. I asked them whether I should cancel my visit to the United States at this time. I was told to go ahead with my plans. One of the strike leaders told me: "You must go to the United States. Do not forget that in 1920 it was President Wilson who saved Albania. And this time, I hope and prey that President Bush and the United States will help Albania through this difficult period."

3. The U.S. Congress and Government have made a great contribution to the development of democracy in Albania and, more

than any other government, have supported rights of Albanians in Yugoslavia. Therefore, the opening and not the closing of the United States toward Albania, the intensification of relations and not the practice of wait and see, are essential for the further development of democracy in Albania. American presence is very encouraging for democratic forces in our country. I believe that U.S.-Albanian relations should be concentrated in these fields:

1. We need immediate American humanitarian aid, especially food and medical supplies. Many people are faced with starvation, the market is empty, there is no social assistance, many workers cannot provide for their families, and there are chronic shortages of medical supplies.

2. We need your technical assistance, primarily in helping us build democratic institutions, without which our country cannot have democracy. We desperately need assistance from legal experts regarding the drafting of legislation, including the new constitution. We also need experts and technical advice regarding economic problems.

3. Albania needs a greater commitment from the United States for its economic revival. I do not mean aid for the communist regime but for the impoverished people of Albania. It is essential that Albania be included in all American programs regarding Eastern Europe. I strongly urge that the American Embassy in Tirana be opened as soon as possibly, that Voice of America broadcasts to Albania be increased, that the United States Information Agency open a center in Tirana and initiate extensive program exchanges

with our country as soon as possible.

Such steps would contribute enormously to the development of democracy in our country. I do not believe that these measures would strength the communist regime.

As it has done until now, the Democratic Party will struggle for the establishment of true democracy in Albania. We are now concentrating our efforts in expanding our support base all over the country, especially in the countryside. We seek to realize our political objectives only through peaceful means. We will fight for the establishment of a state based on the rule of law, the free movement of people, ideas, and goods, and the creation of a market economy. The Democratic Party will continue to demand that the human and national rights of Albanians in Yugoslavia be fully protected.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our people are experiencing dramatic times. Nevertheless, I remain optimistic. Like God gave Abraham the promised land for his people, this great democracy will reward the Albanians' trust in democracy by assisting them in restoring full democracy in their country.

Thank You Very Much.

STATEMENT OF WILLIAM D. FRITTS, JR.
COMMISSIONER FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

HEARING ON DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENTS IN ALBANIA
MAY 22, 1991

Thank you, Mr Chairman:

Dr. Berisha and Mr. Kadare, Welcome! I am looking forward very much to hearing your testimony today. I want also to congratulate the Chairman and Co-Chairman on their unfailing sense of timing in bringing before the Commission issues of vital importance to Albania, to post-Soviet Eastern Europe and to the CSCE.

The Albanian people's determination to break with the past was demonstrated in June, 1990 when representatives from Albania attended the Copenhagen Human Dimension Meeting in an observer status. In December 1990, the text of Albania's new draft constitution to replace the 1976 Constitution was published. This was a milestone in Albania's history, allowing new guarantees of freedom of religion, expression and travel and permitting foreign investment in Albania. March 1991 was a propitious month: the United States and Albania restored diplomatic ties after 52 years and the first multi-party elections since 1920 took place. The creation of independent, alternative political parties was an irretrievable move towards democracy, I might add, of major significance, for Albania has achieved greater reforms in a shorter period of time than any other Eastern European state. I can readily agree with the journalist Patrick Brogan, who wrote recently that "Albania's history is one of stubborn independence over the millennia." I am sure that the Commission will join me in saluting Dr. Berisha, Mr. Kadare and the Albanian people.

I was fortunate to join with other members of the Commission in their recent visit to Albania, just as the Albanian elections were beginning. I was deeply impressed by the physical beauty of the country and surprised by the obsolescence of its facilities.

Many observers have been disappointed at the results of the recent elections in Albania. I do not share that disappointment. I feel that freedom has escaped from prison there and, though it may take some time, the commitment of the Albanian people to self determination will prevail.

That the Democratic Party, together with other opposition parties, less than four months old, won about a third of the seats

in the Assembly, in opposition to a government party which controlled the press and was notorious for its repressive

measures, to my mind, bodes well for the future of the country.

The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the Conference of which it is a part, will continue to monitor the performance of the Albanian government in human rights and in providing the tools for self government of its people.. Albania seeks a broader role in the CSCE and in European affairs generally. Its access to that role will be determined , in large part, by how it performs now.

In that context, I am most anxious to hear our witnesses. Through their testimony and the vigilance of CSCE, we will learn whether, and to what extent, Albania deserves a place in the new and evolving Europe.

Dr. Berisha, as head of the opposition Democratic Party , is uniquely equipped to tell us of the workings of the Albanian Electoral process. Will there be mechanisms to protect the rights of minority candidates in the upcoming elections? Are those mechanisms adequate to protect the rights of minority candidates?

The answers to these and questions like them are eagerly awaited. In the meantime, I welcome Dr. Berisha and Mr. Kadare and look forward to their testimony.

ALBANIAN-AMERICAN CULTURAL SOCIETY

8303 DWYER ST. — DETROIT, MICHIGAN 48211

Hon. Steny H. Hoyer, Chairman
Hon. Dennis DeConcini,Co-Chairman
Commission on
Security and Cooperation in Europe
Congress of the United States
237 House Office Building Annex 2
Washington, D.C. 20515

May 18,1991

Dear Mssrs. Hoyer and DeConcini,

This letter serves to inform you of my intention to attend the Commission's Public Hearing to examine recent developments in Albania, scheduled for May 22,1991 at the Hart Senate Office Building. Realizing the short span of time which has been alloted for the hearing, I am enclosing my remarks for your consideration, should time not allow my testimony.

While one could hardly describe the recent elections in Albania as "free", on the surface, at least there appears to be an effort to move toward a modicum of self-determination for the oppressed peoples of Albania. Or so it seems. Given the inherent duplicity of Albanian politics, I would trust that we would move with deliberation, if not caution, in establishing ties and in supporting the new regime. Or, should we dub the Albanian government Neo-Hoxhaist or Neo-Stalinist? Perhaps, an unholy wedding of the two , given the terrorism and suppression which characterized this "free" election. I , for one, denied entry to the country as an observer, stood in an airport in Tirana surrounded by machine-gun toting military and Sigurimi officers. If this reception was accorded to me, a US citizen of Albanian descent(my public protests of Albanian Communism, notwithstanding), I am compelled to question the sincerity and truth of this election, as well as the intent of the ruling party.

Before this nation opens its coffers of foreign aid to this sham government "for the people and by the people of Albania", I advise that we :

First: **Establish irrevocable non-negotiable conditions which must be met**

Second: **Adopt a gradual , phasic approach to diplomacy, rather than the "open-arms, open-door"policy so characteristic of our nation.**

Specifically , I am advocating that the new regime of Albania evidence its commitment to the principles of democracy which it failed to observe in the election process by:

* Ensuring freedom of speech and press

* Allowing freedom of movement for its citizens and for visitors regardless of their ethnic heritage

* Recognition and legalization of the opposition parties both within Albania and abroad

* Admission of opposition parties to the Assembly

* Freeing of political prisoners and prisoners of conscience

* Cessation of all acts of brutality,seizure of properties,wrongful imprisonment,execution and torture of opponents of the regime

Unless the United States demands that these conditions be met, we can not justify support for any reason "humanitarian" or economic, for there is no assurance that the people, other than party collaborators will derive benefit. Is Albania any different from South Africa ? Even in the early stages of the new regime there have been reports of widespread abuse and corruption, with some party bosses building villas with indoor swimming pools and recklessly spending the "people's" money on lavish vacations in Florida, the Mediterranean, Morocco and other jet-set style locales.

This nation can ill-afford to support the flagrantly oppressive government of Albania without assurances and on-site oversight of the use of our US tax dollars, particularly with our massive deficit, our war debts and the growing rate of unemployment on the home front. It is advisable, therefore, should dollars be appropriated for relief of the famine and illness, these dollars should be expended in the purchase of the US surplus foods and medicines to be shipped or airlifted directly to Albania. This way those dollars will not work their way into the pockets of some greedy party boss or commissar.

The Commision should appoint an oversight or research team to accurately assess the needs of the people of Albania on-site. We should not be content to write a blank check in the amount quoted by this oppressive regime. I would vigorously and publicly protest such an irresponsible move .

Finally, I strongly urge that, until the aforementioned conditions are met, the Albanian government not be accorded status as an observer to the deliberations of the CSCE and that it similarly be barred from full membership in the Helsinki process.

Sincerely,

John Prel Kelmendi, Ed.D.
President

ISBN 0-16-035560-5

90000

9 780160 355608